

Cottey Seminar // Aug. 10-13, 2024

Alaska State Chapter Report

135 P.E.O.s from the around the U.S. and Canada convened in Nevada, Missouri for Cottey Seminar 2024. The five officers of International Chapter attended also and were visible and accessible throughout. Attendees stayed in the Robertson “Robbie” residence hall and ate at the Raney dining room while attending workshops and touring the campus. Cottey staff participated and were available throughout. Alaska’s Cottey student, Ella Sapinosa, was working in the Spirit Shop while we visited and we all got to say hello to her. She expressed her gratitude for all the support during her time at Cottey and is looking forward to her final year.

Alaska State Chapter Attendees

- Mary Britton, Projects Committee
- Alida Bus, Treasurer
- Marcia Eskridge, Organizer

State of the College Address by President Stephanie Niles

- Founded in 1884. P.E.O. owned since 1927.
- Cottey became a 4-year college in 2011.
- 7:1 student to faculty ratio.
- Focus on experiential learning, community, international experience and leadership development.
- In the 2023-24 year, enrollment was 266; won’t know until Sept. 6th what 2024-25 enrollment will be (anticipated to be higher). Residential capacity is 350, over the years enrollment ebbs between 250-320.
- In 2025, a college enrollment cliff is anticipated across all colleges nationwide, exacerbated by the pandemic. Funding was protected by COVID funding but that’s now drying up.
- Have been covering shortages by spending from unrestricted reserves but they have no debt and a large restricted endowment.
- Strategic focus areas:
 1. increase enrollment (added political science, business administration, hired Kennedy & Co. to look at online course offerings for non-traditional students and adding graduate courses, focused internships to partner with Cottey alum)
 2. fundraising (c/o institutional advancement team: undesignated and designated gifts, endowed funds, scholarships, and planned gifts)
 3. non-enrollment revenue (family reunions, retreats, expanded use of facilities rental – especially B.I.L. lodge, P.E.O. travel tours, hosting summer camps)
 4. cost containment (reevaluating priorities, eliminated associates degrees, eliminated music, French, Spanish as a minor or as a degree, savings in insurance, delaying filling empty positions)

Taking Cottey to the World

Every junior has the opportunity to go abroad over spring break, and the cost of their trip is included. They take a class ahead of the trip to learn about the culture, politics, customs of the place. Recent locations have been Vienna, Dublin and upcoming is Athens. The students vote on the destination. Very few students don't go on the trip.

P.E.O. Events

- Vacation College – August 2025
- P.E.O. Visit Day – October
- Travel with Cottey – New York City and Athens, Greece in 2025

Campus Tours

We visited the library, wellness center (offering counseling, student support through a clothes closet and food pantry, a relaxation room, etc), the athletic facilities, the three residential halls and the president's home.

Promoting Cottey to Prospective Students

- 35% of students come from >200 miles away.
- International recruitment: in-nation recruiter in Vietnam to cover SE Asia. Partner in France. Partner WEMA, a Kenyan-based opportunity for young women to be targeted by Cottey before they are sold/dowry. Indian and Pakistan have U-grad program. And others.
- Admittedly Cottey is not a cheap option, but there's a great return on investment and lots of financial aid coverage.
- How to approach Gen Z and Alpha: understanding they care about social responsibility, are apprehensive of debt/loans, etc. Cottey using lots of digital media to reach this age class, which is helpful for Cottey as it is trackable.
- Prospective students' visits to campus include a stay in a hotel. Some state offer specific funds to cover some of these costs. Multiple incentives for students and P.E.O.s to refer students to visit. If they do visit and subsequently attend Cottey, they get \$1500/year (\$6K total).
- STAR nominees get provisional acceptance and guaranteed financial aid up to \$10K/year.
- Cottey students referred by a P.E.O. also get provisional acceptance and guaranteed financial aid up to \$10K/year. ** confirm acceptance language

Suite Life

- 30 clubs and organizations.
- Up to 10 students per suite. Double and single rooms.
- Cottey Outreach and Response Team (CORT): system to look out for students' well-being. A way for students, staff or faculty to notify CORT of a potential problem to allow for early intervention as appropriate.

- Some students live off campus and commute. This is discouraged as there is such benefit from the Suite Life experience.
- Three town houses just off campus for upper classman.
- Parking is free. Laundry is DIY but included.

Athletics

- 38% of students are athletes.
- 12 sports.
- Participate in NAIA conference.
- Champions of Character program. Requires community volunteer hours.

Experiential Learning

- Big for retention
- As an example, English majors went on a Willa Cather excursion to Nebraska, exploring social responsibility and global and environmental awareness.
- Labs on campus: Cadaver lab, Stock trading/Esports lab, Elementary education lab.

Financial Aid

- Cost is \$38,802 for the 2024-25 year (tuition, room, meals, fees).
- Because of financial aid, scholarships and grants, student pays \$10K on average.
- 40-44% of students graduate with no debt.
- Any \$500 lump sum to Cottey counts as a Luminary Chapter gift.
- 60% of students are PELL eligible as far as financial aid need.
- Students eligible for ELF now that it's a 4-year school

Ways to Give

- Professional clothing loan closet.
- Connection with internships and experiential opportunities
- Cottey Cash: Can be spent in the Spirit Shop, Chellie Club, shuttles to/from airport. Note: expires at end of school year.
- Finals Week Care Packages: Put together by Cottey. Includes snacks. Benefits a scholarship. November 19 and April 22 are the deadlines for fall and spring semesters of the 2024-25 year. Cost is \$25.
- P.E.O. Care Pkgs: Students recommend gift cards to Walmart or Amazon or Visa (they don't have a Starbucks or Target). Cleaning products for the suites are not provided by the school so that's an idea. Can send to Student Life staff **Shaun*** West, she will get it to the student and ensure she writes a thank you note.

More information at cottey.edu